

# MINUTES

REGULAR MEETING OF  
CITY OF ALAMEDA ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION  
THURSDAY, JANUARY 17, 2008  
7:30 PM

1. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

Chairman Wetzork called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m.

Present: Chairman Wetzork. Commission Members: Autorino, Bonta, Dahlberg, Lindsey, Ryan, and Zuppan

Absent: Commission Member Schmitz

Vacancy: (1)

Staff: Leslie Little, Eric Fonstein, and Rosemary Valeska

2. MINUTES

2.a. Minutes of the Regular Meeting of November 15, 2007

Motion (Dahlberg), seconded, and unanimous to approve the minutes of the Regular Meeting of November 15, 2007, as submitted.

3. CONSENT CALENDAR

(None)

4. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS – PUBLIC

(None)

5. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

(None)

Since the presenter for items 6.a. and 6.b was not yet in attendance, Chairman Wetzork directed that Item 6.c. be taken next.

6. NEW BUSINESS

6.c. LAMBRA Program Update

Mr. Fonstein recapped the written staff report. This item was presented for information, only; no EDC action was requested.

6.a. Request for Review and Comment – Draft General Plan Amendment, Section 2.5, Retail Business and Services

6.b. Request for Review and Commend – Draft Zoning Text Amendments Regarding Large Format Retail

With the Chair's permission, Planning Services Manager Andrew Thomas gave a single presentation to address both items. The Planning and Building Department is now positioned to begin the process of amending the 1999 General Plan Update retail policies to reflect the Alameda Citywide Retail Policy, which was accepted by the City Council in June 2004. This is part of the Citywide Retail Policy implementation plan.

"Big Box Retail" has been discussed in our community. Other cities have also looked at large format retail. The City Council has asked staff to look into a possible revision of the Zoning Ordinance to address this issue. The Citywide retail policies need to be brought forward to amend the General Plan before the Zoning Ordinance can be revised.

Other communities have restricted large format retail based on size. Retail is currently permitted in every commercial and manufacturing district in the city; however, the Planning Board would like discretionary view, by means of a conditional use permit, should the proposed retail use exceed a certain size. A worst-case scenario would be an owner of a large warehouse on the Northern Waterfront asking to put in a very large retailer that may not be appropriate for that location. Right now, Planning would only have discretionary review over the design but not the use. The proposed zoning change would require a conditional use permit if the retail project exceeds a certain size - 30,000 square feet is currently being discussed. Planning needs to have the discretion to ask if this permitted use is right for the site based upon size. This would give the City the ability to impose conditions on the retail operation, e.g., hours of operation and hours of delivery. Mr. Thomas asked for EDC comment to take back to the Planning Board on January 28.

Commission Member Zuppan asked how Planning came up with the 30,000 square-foot figure, when it is 50 percent or less than the limit set by other cities. Mr. Thomas responded that the question asked first was, "Should we have a prohibition?" Other cities prohibit large format retail based upon a set size. The original proposal to the Planning Board was to prohibit large format retail over 60,000 square feet. It was later decided to go in the direction of requiring a conditional use permit. Staff asked what would be the size of store that would have significant effects on retail at Alameda Towne Centre, Park Street, and Webster Street. Based on that, staff arrived at 30,000 square feet as their definition of large format retail in Alameda. Commission Member Zuppan stated that we should not apply the requirement for a conditional use permit in every part of the city, just in specific areas where it would be needed. She stated that she was concerned about Alameda's reputation in the development community, and that a citywide conditional use permit requirement would be a "blunt instrument" that could hinder economic development given the current economy. Mr. Thomas responded that the Planning Board did not consider the use permit process as a burdensome obstacle when applied

to standard projects. Here it would be used to guard against a worst-case scenario.

Commission Member Ryan asked about the size of the Safeway store at Alameda Towne Centre. Ms. Little stated that it is 62,000 square feet. She added that Nob Hill was 54,000 square feet. Commission Member Ryan stated that he didn't see anything wrong in requiring a use permit if the square footage exceeded the size of the Safeway store. Mr. Thomas stated that if the EDC thinks that 30,000 square feet is too low, the Planning Board will want to hear about it.

Commission Member Autorino asked if Planning wanted to address impacts or just restrict what goes in? Mr. Thomas responded that size does determine the level of impacts. Commission Member Autorino stated that Planning should address the concerns, not the size. Mr. Thomas cited the four proposed findings for a large format retail development, which is contained on pages 4 and 5 of the Alameda Planning Board staff report for the December 10, 2007 meeting, which was included as part of the EDC's agenda packet. Mr. Thomas added that Planning can't pick and choose stores; they can only address land use.

Commission Member Bonta asked how this use permit proposal compared with neighboring jurisdictions. Mr. Thomas responded that we would be in the ballpark with other cities. He added that the structure of our current Zoning Ordinance goes back to the 1950s. Other cities' zoning ordinances are more "fine grained." Our Zoning Ordinance has been more patchwork, e.g., addressing the issue of check cashing stores. The key is how we use the use permit requirement.

Chairman Wetzork stated that he was concerned that there was no comment regarding the use of historic buildings such as the Del Monte Building. Mr. Thomas responded that this has been a tough project, and the City staff has been in discussions with the property owner for five years. The Del Monte Building is 250,000 square feet. One approach might be to allow for exemptions for dedicated City monuments, which would apply to the Del Monte Building. Another approach would be a master plan. He noted that Alameda Landing and Alameda Point development will be governed by master plans.

Chairman Wetzork stated that the issue of traffic will always relate directly to development, and that there are two ways to look at traffic: 1) from the perspective of the business owner; and 2) from the perspective of the citizens. He added that a use permit determination can be a subjective judgment. Mr. Thomas responded that most of the Planning Department's time is spent reviewing the traffic impacts of development. Mr. Thomas noted that the community came out in support of Alameda Landing in spite of identified traffic impacts. Chairman Wetzork stated that in public

meetings, the public will state that they don't want traffic, but businesses depend on traffic; without development, the City will die.

Commission Member Zuppan asked about the possibility of different size restrictions for different districts. Chairman Wetzork stated that we need to educate the public on what "big box" is – a warehouse store like Costco is a "big box"; however, a discount department store like Target is not. Mr. Thomas thanked the EDC for their comments.

## 7. REPORTS

### 7.a. Oral Report: Chairman Wetzork – EDC representative to the Pedestrian Task Force

Chairman Wetzork stated there had been no meeting, so he had no report at this time.

### 7.b. Oral Report: Commission Member Autorino – EDC representative to the City of Alameda Task Force of the Alameda County Climate Protection Project

Prior to the meeting, Commission Member Autorino had provided Commission Members and staff with copies of the document, *Local Action Plan for Climate Protection, Draft 12/19/07*. He discussed some highlights of this document. One recommendation is for the formation of an ongoing task force to oversee the implementation of this plan. This draft plan will be presented to the City Council soon. There has been good citizen participation at the task force meetings. In response to a question from Chairman Wetzork, Commission Member Autorino stated that if AUSD participated in recycling, Alameda would be at 100%

### 7.c. Oral Report: Commission Member Schmitz – EDC representative to the Alameda Point Advisory Task Force

As Commission Member Schmitz was absent, there was no report.

## 8. WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS

### 8.a. Upcoming EDC Agenda Items

### 8.b. Redevelopment – Building Better Communities

## 9. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS – COMMISSION MEMBERS AND STAFF

### 9.a. Staff update – Alameda Theater & Parking Structure Project

- Mr. Fonstein reported that the CIC unanimously approved the Economic Development Strategic Plan Update at the January 15 meeting. The CIC congratulated the EDC on a fine document.
- The CIC also unanimously approved on January 15, the consultant contract with City Design Collective for the Park Street North of

Lincoln Strategic Plan. Consultant meetings with stakeholders, including the Chair and Vice Chair of the EDC, have been scheduled for Wednesday, January 30. A public design charrette has been tentatively scheduled for Saturday, February 23, at the Main Library. The consultant will then schedule a public "open studio." An open house/gallery is planned for March. The consultant's final work product will be brought before the EDC, boards and commissions, then City Council.

- The dedication ceremony for the parking structure is scheduled for Thursday, January 31, at 11:45 a.m.
- Permanent electrical power has been installed in the parking structure. The elevator won't be operational at the time of the garage opening, as the elevator will still be awaiting the required State inspection.
- The pay-by-space machines for the garage have just been delivered and should be installed by January 31.
- There is work to be done to repair water damage inside the walls of the historic theater caused by the recent storms.
- The theater is now scheduled to open in late April/early May.
- BurgerMeister is making progress with their tenant improvements.
- Ms. Little noted that movie exhibitors have been calling the City regarding the availability of the historic theater.

9.b. Update by Development Services Director Leslie Little Regarding Alameda Point

- Ms. Little stated that on February 12, representatives of the City and SunCal met with Navy representatives in San Diego to report on the preliminary findings of their due diligence.
- On Thursday, December 13, SunCal held a community meeting at the O'Club. There was a good representation of people from within and outside Alameda. Two concepts were presented: one was Measure A compliant; the other was not.
- SunCal has indicated that the Preferred Development Concept for Alameda Point won't work for them. This is a result of additional costs resulting from newly-identified climate and seismic related issues. There are also concerns due to risk management and the uncertainty of the financial markets.
- SunCal has done a detailed evaluation of historic buildings for reuse.

- SunCal will reach their first mandatory milestone, as outlined in the Exclusive Negotiation Agreement, by the end of March 2008 – the development concept, along with the infrastructure and business plans to support that draft concept. SunCal gave their required quarterly status report to ARRA on January 3.
- The next community meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, January 30, at the O'Club.
- Public benefit/homeless providers have until the end of February to submit applications for the former Coast Guard housing site. Meetings with prospective applicants and tours of the site were conducted in November and December. A workshop was held and attended by more than twice the number of people expected. The Housing Authority is considering forming a partnership with a non-profit.
- In response to a question by Commission Member Dahlberg regarding the Navy's stated sale price for Alameda Point, Ms. Little stated that the Navy's price of \$108.5 million was based upon the Preferred Development Concept. SunCal is trying to figure out what the redevelopment costs will be. The Tidelands Trust would control the property if the Navy did not.

Additional items:

- Chairman Wetzork reminded all present that the Chamber of Commerce's Thursday, January 24 lunch will be held at Grandview Pavilion. The guest speaker will be Pat Keliher of SunCal.
- Commission Member Autorino asked that he be contacted to confirm the details for the January 26 City of Alameda Build Day at the Buena Vista Commons project site.

10. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was unanimously adjourned at 9:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Eric Fonstein  
Development Manager

EF:rv